



## Policy on Matching Grant Program for Formally Recognized Neighborhoods

### I. NEIGHBORHOOD PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The City implemented the neighborhood program, Partnerships For Stronger Neighborhoods, in 2000 to build relationships with the City's existing neighborhoods, while encouraging and assisting new neighborhood groups, in an effort to enhance the quality of life in the City and stimulate activity within neighborhoods and in City events. The Neighborhood Program is designed to foster greater communication between neighborhood groups and the City of Concord.

In order to join the program, a group of neighbors simply needs to complete an application form, define boundaries, develop a set of by-laws, elect officers and develop a set of goals for the neighborhood. After the application has been reviewed by the staff, it is forwarded to City Council for formal action. Upon approval, the City Manager assigns a City staff person to serve as a liaison to the neighborhood. The liaison attends neighborhood meetings and assist residents in identifying solutions to problems. Based upon these relationships, City staff is better able to deliver services tailored to the needs of individual neighborhood and obtain feedback on proposed public improvement projects within the City.

### II. NEIGHBORHOOD MATCHING GRANT PROGRAM PURPOSE

The matching grant program is designed to assist recognized neighborhood organizations in implementing projects that will improve the neighborhood physically, market the neighborhood, or enhance the neighborhood organization. The idea of the grant program is to facilitate neighborhood self-improvement. This program gives recognized neighborhood organizations an incentive to raise funds, build partnerships with businesses and organizations, cultivate volunteer and community support to complete a project, and act as active developers of their communities. The matching grant program provides recognized neighborhood groups with access to funds of up to \$3,000. The value of the neighborhood's contribution must be equal or greater than the City's grant.

#### *Use of funds*

The grant can be used towards neighborhood improvement, crime/public safety awareness, and recreational/social initiatives. Matching Grant Funds **CANNOT be used for maintenance or repair projects** that come under the responsibility of the Homeowners, Property Owners, or Neighborhood Associations.

#### **Neighborhood Improvement**

Funding is permitted for permanent neighborhood entrance identity signs. All neighborhood identity sign projects must be reviewed and approved by the City's Transportation

Department and/or Development Service Department before submission of the grant application. This is to ensure that projects are in conformance with City standards. Temporary signs are not eligible for matching grant funds. Physical improvements toward the beautification of a subdivision entrance, including construction of flower beds, planting trees, retention pond rehab, graffiti cleanup, or adding/modifying entrance signs; such as landscaping and beautification, community gardens, small playgrounds, street light installation and neighborhood clean-ups.

### **Crime and Public Safety**

Funding is permitted for programs that engage neighborhoods in public safety through programs and activities that reduce crime and increases the feeling of safety in the neighborhood such as: National Night Out, neighborhood crime prevention programs; family safety training and activities; senior citizen home safety programs; drug and fire prevention programs; Community Emergency Response Training (CERT). Projects may include Neighborhood Watch signs, citizens' patrols, crime prevention, and fire safety programs

### **Recreational and Social Initiatives**

Entertainment expenses for activities such as festivals and/or neighborhood social events intended to encourage participation amongst neighborhood residents are eligible for matching grant funds; however, food is not an eligible expense but food items that are donated or purchased can be counted toward the match if food is an integral part of the project.

These category lists are not final and the City supports imaginative projects. No expenditure of funds under this program shall be made for any purpose other than a public purpose for which municipalities in North Carolina are authorized.

## **III. REQUIREMENTS**

The requirements for the grant include:

- A Neighborhood Organization must be formally recognized by the City of Concord's Neighborhood Program for at least a year before being eligible for a matching grant. (Please see: Newsletter/Outreach Grant eligibility for those newly recognized neighborhoods)
- Project must be completed in twelve (12) months or less
- Submit a completed grant application.
- Neighborhood association must provide proof of 100% matching of contributions, volunteer time, cash, or in-kind donations of goods and services (to include signed letters of intent as proof needed to meet the required match of the grant funds) The approved methods of generating funds include:
  - Fundraising or letters of intent for cash donations (if applicable, pledges by companies must be on letterhead)
  - Volunteer hours, worth \$10/hour (cannot be more than 50% of the matching amount); must include volunteer pledge sheet
  - Donations, such as supplies, equipment or professional services. Value will be based upon the reasonable and customary value of services (if applicable, pledges by companies must be on letterhead with detailed list of donations and cost)

- Submission of a proposed budget, project plan and timeline.
- Official record from neighborhood meeting minutes that the neighborhood agrees to the project.
- All projects will be subject to City regulations and permits in effect at the time of application.

#### IV. EVALUATION CRITERIA

An applicant may submit an application for more than one project. However, each project must be able to stand-alone. Grant funds cannot be used to replace the organization's current operating budget or supplement city services. Projects will be evaluated on the following criteria:

CRITERION PRIORITY	WEIGHT	EXPLANATION
<b>1. Supports Program Mission</b>	25	The project should improve the neighborhood physically, market the neighborhood, or enhance the neighborhood organization.
<b>2. Neighborhood Match</b>	35	The match meets the minimum requirement and is secured and ready to be expended.
<b>3. Neighborhood Contribution</b>	15	The extent that the neighborhood organization will participate in the project.
<b>4. Benefit to Neighborhood</b>	15	Projects must provide the public a tangible benefit and benefit the neighborhood as a whole.
<b>5. Project Readiness</b>	10	Requested funds must be sufficient to complete the project within 12 months.

#### V. APPROVAL PROCESS AND REVIEW

Applications are due to the Community Outreach Coordinator in the City Manager's Office located in City Hall by 5pm on the proposal due date. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.

A Grant Review Team comprised of representatives from some or all of the following City departments will review each application and score them based on the evaluation criteria listed in the above table and make recommendations to City Council, who have the final authority to approve or deny a grant request:

Planning & Neighborhood Services  
Finance  
Transportation  
Parks and Recreation (if applicable)

City Attorney (if necessary)  
City Manager (administration)  
Police (if applicable)

This process takes approximately six weeks from the application deadline. Once the application has been formally awarded by City Council, and the project is complete, the City will make the award.

Because grant funds are public dollars, the City must meet certain audit requirements for funds that it expends. The City Finance Department handles all grant accounts. Grant funds will be disbursed using City Purchase Orders, reimbursement directly to approved vendors, or reimbursement directly to the applicant. Reimbursement to the applicant will only be made when supported by original third party receipts up to the approved grant amount. The neighborhood must submit a request for reimbursement to the Coordinating Planner. To include the following:

1. Letter requesting reimbursement; signed by the president of the neighborhood association
2. Copy of paid invoices or receipts (for proof of purchase)
3. Copy of cancelled check



## Policy on Neighborhood Newsletter and Outreach Grants for Formally Recognized Neighborhoods

### Newsletter and Outreach Grants

The costs of producing and distributing neighborhood newsletters, information cards, or directories are eligible for funding for all neighborhoods officially recognized by the City of Concord as part of the Neighborhood Program. The standard of grant support for cost of newsletters, directories, and/or information cards is one dollar per household within the neighborhood. (For example, if your neighborhood has 100 residents and each household is contacted, you may apply for \$100 a year in grant funds, if you meet grant guidelines)

### REQUIREMENTS

The requirements for the grant include:

- Any Neighborhood Organization that has been formally recognized by the City of Concord's Neighborhood Program.
- Eligible neighborhoods are those neighborhoods recognized and defined by **HUD** as low to moderate-income neighborhoods.
- Grants are used **only** for Outreach products: newsletter, directories, or information cards
- Submit a completed grant application outlining outreach activities.
- Submission of a statement of projected costs according to the number of households in the neighborhood, publishing/distribution schedules, and timelines.
- Neighborhood association must provide proof of matching of volunteer time and in-kind donations of goods and services (to include signed letters of intent as proof needed to meet the required match of the grant funds) The approved methods of generating match include:
  - Volunteer hours, worth \$10/hour (cannot be more than 75% of the matching amount); must include volunteer pledge sheet
  - Donations, such as supplies, equipment or professional services. Value will be based upon the reasonable and customary value of services (if applicable, pledges by companies must be on letterhead with detailed list of donations and cost)
- Official record from neighborhood meeting minutes that the neighborhood agrees to the project.
- All projects will be subject to City regulations and permits in effect at the time of application.

Because grant funds are public dollars, the City must meet certain audit requirements for funds that it expends. The City Finance Department handles all grant accounts. Grant funds will be disbursed using City Purchase Orders, reimbursement directly to approved vendors, or reimbursement directly to the applicant. Reimbursement to the applicant will only be made when supported by original third party receipts up to the approved grant amount. The neighborhood must submit a request for reimbursement to the Neighborhood Program Manager.

To include the following:

- Letter requesting reimbursement; signed by the president of the neighborhood association on neighborhood letterhead,
- Copy of paid invoices or receipts (for proof of purchase),
- Copy of outreach product submitted to Neighborhood Manager,
- Copy of cancelled check.